

REMARKS

Claims 2-4, 6-9, and 11-23 are pending in this application. Claims 2-9 have been allowed. By this Amendment, claims 12, 15-19, and 23 have been amended.

Applicants take this opportunity to thank the Examiner for indicating that, in addition to allowed claims 2-9, claims 13-23 contain allowable subject matter. In light of that indication, Applicants have rewritten claim 23 in independent form to place that claim in condition for allowance.

Applicants also wish to express sincere appreciation to the Examiner and his supervisor (Ms. Cuneo) for the courtesy extended to Applicants' representative during the personal interview held on May 18, 2005. At the interview, the 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) rejection outstanding in the February 22, 2005 Office Action was discussed. The following remarks reflect the subject matter discussed during the interview.

In the Office Action, claims 11 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,868,715 to Putman et al. ("Putman").

During the interview, the Examiner indicated that Putman does not anticipate independent claim 11. Claim 12 has been rewritten in dependent form to depend from independent claim 11. For at least these reasons, claims 11 and 12 are patentably distinguishable from Putman.

Applicants respectfully request the Examiner's reconsideration of this application and the allowance of all pending claims.

The Office Action contains a number of statements and characterizations regarding the claims and the related art. Applicants decline to subscribe automatically to any statement or characterization in the Office Action, regardless of whether it is addressed above.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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